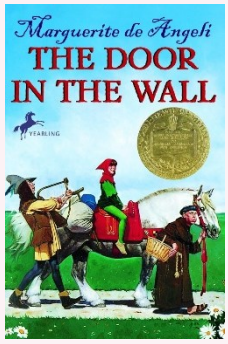
GIRL'S BOOK CLUB GUIDE

THE DOOR IN THE WALL

By Marguerite De Angeli



"Always remember...Thou hast only to follow the wall far enough and there will be a door in it."

GENRE

Historical Fiction (1300s Middle Ages)

THEMES

Coming - Of - Age | Finding Purpose | Barriers + Hope | Stewardship of Gifts

CHARACTERS

Robin – 10-year-old protagonist, son of an English nobleman.

Dame Ellen – the servant left in charge of Robin when his parents leave. Robin is rude and eventually drives her off with his bad behaviour.

Brother Luke – patient, loving monk who helps Robin strengthen his body while also improving in knowledge, maturity, and courage.

John-go-in-the-Wynd – a kind and helpful minstrel who journeys with Robin and Brother Luke. He has a hand in the ultimate resolution of the war.

Geoffrey Atte-Water – a boy with a limp who befriends Robin.

Sir Peter de Lindsay – Robin's godfather, a nobleman for whom Robin was supposed to serve as a page before his illness. His castle is the destination goal for most of the book.

Brother Matthew – another monk who takes part in patiently teaching Robin some woodworking skills.

Sir John and Lady Maud de Bureford – Robin's parents, forced apart from each other for the bulk part of the story

STORYLINE

Set in England during a time of unrest (Middle Ages, 1300s), a boy's training for knighthood is derailed by a physical affliction. With caring adults supporting him, Robin learns to persevere through difficulties, to discipline himself daily in both mind and body, and ultimately to take hold of courage when lives need saving. His problems are universally relatable, and his story is timeless.

1 QUESTION ONE

Among what kind (or kinds) of people is the story set?

2 QUESTION TWO

What do you know about medieval architecture and how is it important to understand the theme of this story? (Particularly the common use of walls and barriers.)

3 QUESTION THREE

How would you describe Robin's personality and skills at the beginning of the book? How do they differ from the Robin at the end?

4 QUESTION FOUR

No two people are the same. How was Robin's first encounter with Geoffrey an eye-opener about differences?

5 QUESTION FIVE

Why does Brother Luke make Robin learn things such as swimming, woodworking, reading, and music? Which of these skills turns out to matter later?

6 QUESTION SIX

Which character would you like to have for a friend? Why?

7 QUESTION SEVEN

The book's title gives us one of its themes: Walls represent barriers while doors show a way through them. Can you identify several "doors" that Robin finds in his "walls"?

8 QUESTION EIGHT

Which person has the greatest influence on Robin? Why?

9 QUESTION NINE

Sir Peter said to Robin, "If we cannot serve in one way, there is always another." What did he mean?

10 QUESTION TEN

If you could write one final chapter to the end, what details would you add?

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